

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A sample carrier comprising:
  - a structural array; and
- 5 a plurality of sample nodes; each of said plurality of sample nodes being removably attached to said structural array at a respective attachment point and operative to carry a discrete sample.
2. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is operative to carry a biological sample.
- 10 3. The sample carrier of claim 2 wherein said biological sample is a protein.
4. The sample carrier of claim 2 wherein said biological sample is a polynucleotide.
5. The sample carrier of claim 4 wherein said polynucleotide is DNA.
6. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is operative to carry a non-biological sample.
- 15 7. The sample carrier of claim 1 further comprising identifying indicia.
8. The sample carrier of claim 7 wherein said indicia are decipherable by an optical sensor.
9. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes
- 20 comprises an associated transceiver operative to transmit a unique signal.
10. The sample carrier of claim 9 wherein said transceiver is further operative to receive a control signal from a remote device.
11. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is solid.
- 25 12. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is porous.
13. The sample carrier of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes comprises a sample support medium.
14. The sample carrier of claim 13 wherein said sample support medium
- 30 comprises cellulose.

15. The sample carrier of claim 13 wherein said sample support medium comprises a polymer.
16. The sample carrier of claim 15 wherein said polymer is polystyrene.
17. The sample carrier of claim 13 wherein said sample support medium is derivatized.
- 5 18. The sample carrier of claim 17 wherein said sample support medium is positively charged.
19. The sample carrier of claim 17 wherein said sample support medium is negatively charged.
- 10 20. A sample carrier comprising:  
a plurality of structural arrays supported in a predetermined spatial relationship; and  
a plurality of sample nodes; wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is removably attached to one of said plurality of structural arrays at a respective attachment point and operative to carry a discrete sample.
- 15 21. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of structural arrays is supported in a predetermined spatial relationship relative to a respective sample container.
- 20 22. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of structural arrays is supported in a predetermined spatial relationship relative to a respective well of a multi-well plate.
23. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is operative to carry a biological sample.
- 25 24. The sample carrier of claim 23 wherein said biological sample is a protein.
25. The sample carrier of claim 23 wherein said biological sample is a polynucleotide.
26. The sample carrier of claim 25 wherein said polynucleotide is DNA.
27. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is operative to carry a non-biological sample.
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JULY 10 2008
28. The sample carrier of claim 20 further comprising identifying indicia.
29. The sample carrier of claim 28 wherein said indicia are decipherable by an optical sensor.
30. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes comprises an associated transceiver operative to transmit a unique signal.
- 5 31. The sample carrier of claim 30 wherein said transceiver is further operative to receive a control signal from a remote device.
32. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is solid.
- 10 33. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is porous.
34. The sample carrier of claim 20 wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes comprises a sample support medium.
35. The sample carrier of claim 34 wherein said sample support medium
- 15 comprises cellulose.
36. The sample carrier of claim 34 wherein said sample support medium comprises a polymer.
37. The sample carrier of claim 36 wherein said polymer is polystyrene.
38. The sample carrier of claim 34 wherein said sample support medium is
- 20 derivatized.
39. The sample carrier of claim 38 wherein said sample support medium is positively charged.
40. The sample carrier of claim 38 wherein said sample support medium is negatively charged.
- 25 41. A method of transferring a specimen to a sample carrier; said method comprising:
- providing a sample carrier comprising a structural array supporting a plurality of sample nodes; and
- contacting said plurality of sample nodes to said specimen.
- 30 42. The method of claim 41 wherein said specimen is a solid.

43. The method of claim 41 wherein said specimen is gaseous.
44. The method of claim 41 wherein said specimen is a liquid.
45. The method of claim 41 further comprising selectively applying a preservative to said plurality of sample nodes subsequent to said contacting.
- 5 46. The method of claim 45 wherein said preservative is operative to desiccate said specimen transferred to said plurality of sample nodes.
47. The method of claim 41 further comprising washing said plurality of sample nodes subsequent to said contacting.
48. The method of claim 41 further comprising allowing said plurality of sample nodes to desiccate subsequent to said contacting.
- 10 49. A method of transferring specimens to a sample carrier; said method comprising:  
providing a sample carrier comprising a plurality of structural arrays, each of said plurality of structural arrays being supported in a predetermined spatial relationship relative to a respective specimen container and supporting a plurality of sample nodes; and  
contacting said plurality of sample nodes supported by selected ones of said plurality of structural arrays to a respective specimen.
- 15 50. The method of claim 49 wherein said contacting comprises bringing said plurality of sample nodes supported by each of said plurality of structural arrays into contact with a specimen in said respective specimen container.
51. The method of claim 49 wherein said respective specimen is a solid.
52. The method of claim 49 wherein said respective specimen is gaseous.
53. The method of claim 49 wherein said respective specimen is a liquid.
- 20 54. The method of claim 49 further comprising applying a preservative to said plurality of sample nodes supported by selected ones of said plurality of structural arrays subsequent to said contacting.
55. The method of claim 54 wherein said preservative is operative to desiccate said respective specimen transferred to said plurality of sample nodes.

56. The method of claim 49 further comprising washing said plurality of sample nodes subsequent to said contacting.
57. The method of claim 49 further comprising allowing said plurality of sample nodes to desiccate subsequent to said contacting.
- 5 58. A sample carrier comprising:
- a structural array comprising a plurality of sample nodes; wherein each of said plurality of sample nodes is removably attached to said structural array at a respective attachment point and comprises a discrete sample support medium; and
- 10 a specimen carried by said sample support medium at one or more of said plurality of sample nodes.
59. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said specimen is biological.
60. The sample carrier of claim 59 wherein said specimen is a protein.
61. The sample carrier of claim 59 wherein said specimen is a polynucleotide.
- 15 62. The sample carrier of claim 61 wherein said polynucleotide is DNA.
63. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said specimen is non-biological.
64. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said sample support medium is solid.
65. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein sample support medium is porous.
66. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said sample support medium
- 20 comprises cellulose.
67. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said sample support medium comprises a polymer.
68. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said sample support medium is derivatized.
- 25 69. The sample carrier of claim 58 wherein said sample support medium is treated with a chemical compound.